



Inclusion Solutions

A newsletter for educators who are doing amazing things!

Spring 2007 Edition

Individuals with Down syndrome have unlimited potential when given the opportunity to succeed.



“Schools Out: A Parent’s Guide to Choosing Summer Programs”

For the past twenty years the Family Conservancy has produced this great booklet to help parents find quality summer child care for their children.

A wealth of information about local child care camps, recreational and enrichment programs is included for kids from the ages of 5-15.

You can access this booklet online in April by visiting:
www.childcaresource.org

Or call the Family Conservancy at 913-342-1110 to find a location to pick up a hard copy.

PENMANSHIP POINTERS

Students with Down syndrome may have difficulty putting pen to paper for a variety of reasons such as low muscle tone, fine motor issues, gross motor issues or ability to form letters. Here are some pointers you can try to improve penmanship:

Provide an array of writing instruments for your students with Down syndrome.

For some individuals with Down syndrome writing with a pencil on paper can be like nails on a chalkboard. Try fat markers or pencils, different colors, different point widths on pens/pencils until you find the writing instrument your student is most comfortable with. What difference does it make if the worksheet is in green crayon or number 2 pencil if the student is able to demonstrate they have learned a concept!

Teach students to make capital letters first. Capital letters have longer strokes which will be easier for the student with Down syndrome to produce. Set your student up to succeed by teaching the easiest letters first: L F E H D P B R N M K. Then move on to more difficult letters. Once capital letters are mastered then you can go back and work on lower case letters.

Give your student with Down syndrome a meaningful reason to write. Writing letters over and over again may not make sense. Have the student copy words from a friends birthday party invitation they are excited about or copy a story about what they did this weekend with their family.

Teach handwriting on a daily basis providing 10 minutes of instruction and 5 minutes of practice time. This should be done every day of the school week. Friday could possibly be set up as a review day, to assess the children's mastery level, without introducing something new.

Use a proven program such as Handwriting Without Tears Visit www.hwtears.com to learn more about a successful program your school can purchase to help teach students with disabilities to be effective writers.



INCLUSION SOLUTIONS WINS KC PHILLY AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN NON PROFIT COMMUNICATIONS

The Council on Philanthropy Philly Awards honor excellence in non-profit communications. A record number of 141 entries were received in the following seven categories: Annual report, Invitation/special event publication, Membership/fundraising appeal, Newsletter, Informational brochure, web site and informational video presentation.

The DSG is proud to report that ***Inclusion Solutions*** took 2nd place for it's outstanding layout and practical tips and tools for educators. Judges commented this is a fabulous resource for educators!

TEN TIPS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS

Classroom aides can support teaching, foster student independence and discourage learned helplessness by following these ten tips.

Facilitate Peer Relationships

Remind others to communicate directly with the student. Let students choose their own seat or place in the classroom. Give students the space and freedom to socialize and develop friendships.



Multi-task in the classroom

Use class lectures as an opportunity to plan accommodations and develop curriculum materials. Time away from the students side promotes independence.



Ask for help

You are not alone! Ask for direction in the classroom. Leave decisions about content and curriculum modifications to the teacher. Seek outside sources or information from local support groups or the internet if you need help.

Let students make mistakes and take risks

Everyone learns from mistakes. Allow natural consequences to be part of the student's classroom experience.



Watch your volume and voice

Discussions with other adults or students during instruction can be disruptive to the class. Save important discussions for after class.



Maintain student dignity

Assume the student can do it! Be discreet about the student's physical needs, delays and accommodations to respect dignity.



Communicate and consult with caregivers

Listen to what families have to say and keep them informed. Learn the strategies that work at home and try them at school with your student.

Give as few prompts as possible

Foster independence. Fade out hand over hand assistance and use it to teach a task, not to complete a task. Resist the temptation to give verbal directions for every task.



Help students create authentic work

Students learn when they actively participate in assignments. Try to avoid completing assignments or answering questions. Show caregivers their child's genuine work in progress



Let students make choices

Give students the ability to control their lives and interact with their environment. Offer choices to the student no matter how insignificant they may seem.

RECESS ROUNDUP!

Having difficulty getting your student with Down syndrome to come in from recess? Try one of these tips:

- Have the student be responsible for blowing the whistle/raising the flag to end recess.
- Have the student be responsible for getting everyone lined up to come in.
- Give the student a reason to go in from recess such as delivering a note to a teacher or bringing in the play equipment.
- With parental permission, have the student “give back” any wasted time coming in at the end of the day.



GOT A GREAT IDEA?

Do you have a great idea you would like to share with other educators? The Down Syndrome Guild would love to hear from you on the methods you are using to create positive outcomes for students with Down syndrome.

Educators who submit a tip, strategy or article for the Spring edition of Inclusion Solutions will be entered in a contest to win a \$50 Plaza Gift Card.

Submissions should be emailed to: kcdsg@sbcglobal.net by April 15, 2007. One winner will be drawn from the entries and the winner will be notified in early May. All tips will be published with the educators name so others will recognize the great work you are doing.

PEER TUTORING TIPS

When students with disabilities listen and learn from their peers. There are many benefits which include:

- Improvement in social skills in and out of the classroom
- Respectful relationships with peers that are reciprocal
- Emergence of team work skills and the desire to be a contributing member
- Faster rate of learning and greater retention of academic material
- Improved self-esteem for all students involved in the tutoring process

Here are a few ways you can encourage peer tutoring in your school:

- Ask for volunteers– select peer role models who are motivated and have time to help
- Identify a helper rotation (peer tutors can move from student to student in case of a personality mismatch)
- Monitor relationships– make sure peers are not doing TOO MUCH for the person they are tutoring
- Buddy up for field trips and special activities– these are more relaxed and fun opportunities to interact
- Provide orientation– make sure your peer volunteers know something about working with students with disabilities
- Get parent buy in– highlight roles and expectations so tutors and parents understand the goals of the peer tutoring program
- Switch roles– find ways for the student who is being tutored to teach something back to their tutor
- Celebrate successes– host a party for everyone involved in the peer tutoring program and identify ways the students with disabilities have increased their capabilities.



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AWESOME ACCOMMODATIONS!

Students that do not write, communicate verbally or comprehend curriculum at grade level can actively participate if you are creative in your accommodations! Check out these creative accommodations and try them with your students.

In Biology the student receives the same worksheet as others in the lab. The student scribbles on the paper while others label the parts of the plant.

Accommodation: Give student Avery labels with simplified terms such as stem, roots, leaves etc. Have student place the stickers to independently label the parts of the plant.

In Health students create the Food Guide Pyramid. A para pastes magazine photos on to paper while the student attends therapy.

Accommodation: Have student choose pictures of foods and place them with the right food group category.



In Math students are working on fraction worksheets that may be difficult to understand.

Accommodation: Have student work with measuring cups following a recipe to learn about fractions. Use practical applications like dividing a pizza that has twelve slices among three friends or purchasing items at the store that are half off.

In PE the class practices archery outside. A para shoots hoops in the gym along side the student with Down syndrome.

Accommodation: Student joins others outside to practice turn taking, social interaction and learns the names of archery equipment. Student is then responsible for helping bring equipment back inside.

In Music the student with Down syndrome is distracting others and singing off key.

Accommodation: Have student organize the musical program books or cut out and paste musical notes in the appropriate locations on worksheets. Give student a short solo to sing at the midpoint of the song.